

# Israeli View: Retaliatory Raids May Be Needed

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LONDON, Jan. 11—Top Israeli officials, anxious about the continuing terrorist raids into their territory and indications that such activity may increase, say privately they may have to launch retaliatory raids inside Jordan and Syria.

"Since the June war we have not staged any raids with ground forces outside our borders," said one ranking official in Tel Aviv. "If countries like Syria and Jordan won't take things in hand, they're asking for trouble."

The threat of a strong, though limited, military riposte underscores the fact that despite the much improved strategic position she achieved during the six-day Arab-Israeli war, Israel is nervous about her security. As long as there is no political settlement of the Middle East crisis, the situation remains volatile.

This is one of the principal conclusions from several weeks of talks with diplomatic and military officials in Washington, Paris, London, Cairo and Tel Aviv.

## Strategic Position Better

From a strategic point of view, Israel has never been in a better position in the nearly two decades of her existence. Whereas before June, well equipped Egyptian, Jordanian and Syrian forces were close to her borders, Israeli forces now command comfortable buffers in the Sinai Peninsula, on the west bank of the Jordan River and along the Golan heights in Syria.

Yet with large Soviet shipments of arms into the area, with a population of about a million Arabs within Israeli-occupied territory, and with increased sabotage in her territory, seven months after the war, Israel is still partially mobilized.

No one expects a resumption of large-scale hostilities in the near future. For one thing, the Arab military leadership is considered far from ready for

another round, even though the Egyptian, Syrian and Iraqi forces are believed to have received sufficient planes and tanks from the Soviet Union to restore their arsenals almost to their prewar levels.

However, purges of key officers in Egypt and the lack of efficient small-unit leaders and technical and maintenance personnel in the Arab armies are believed to render them incapable of a sustained attack on Israel for the time being. Estimates on when they may be able to contemplate renewed fighting range from several months to a couple of years.

## Soviet Influence Increases

The Soviet Union, moreover, now is thought to have achieved a much stronger influence over the Egyptian armed forces, both through its supply of weapons and vital spare parts and the physical presence in the United Arab Republic of thousands of its advisers, instructors and other technical personnel.

The prevailing opinion, both among Israeli officials and Western diplomats in Egypt and in Western capitals, is that while Moscow can best continue its penetration of the Middle East in an atmosphere of tension, it is anxious to avoid another war that conceivably could lead to a confrontation between Soviet and United States forces.

The thinking behind this argument is approximately the following:

Israeli forces are within easy striking distance of Cairo, Damascus and Amman. If war broke out, could the Soviet Union permit Israel, for instance, to take Cairo without direct intervention, and if it intervened and so shifted the balance of power that the survival of Israel was at stake, could the United States stay out?

No one is in a position to say whether the Soviet Union or the United States would intervene directly. But the possibility cannot be dismissed.

It is noted, for instance, that

Soviet pilots are thought to have taken a direct hand recently in the civil war in Yemen, flying some missions in support of the republican forces there.

## More Infiltration Expected

The matter of guerrilla activity in Israel is receiving more attention partly because of a recent shift by the Egyptian Government to support such a campaign. The Israelis expect that this will result in a greater effort to infiltrate guerrillas and saboteurs.

Since the Sinai war in 1956, Egypt took the position that guerrilla raids were counterproductive in that they increased world sympathy for Israel, afforded Israel an excuse for retaliatory raids and might force the Arab world into a war before it was ready.

In recent months, Western diplomatic sources in Cairo report—and Israeli intelligence agrees—the Government of President Gamal Abdel Nasser has shifted its position.

Egyptian officials are said to believe that nearly every guerrilla raid is displayed prominently in newspapers around the world, undercutting Israeli contention that everything is under control. When Israeli security forces counter such activity by blowing up Arab homes and staging midnight searches, it might tend to depict the Israelis more as a ruthless occupying force than an aggrieved victim of aggression. Furthermore repressive measures might so arouse the Arab population within Israel that an internal guerrilla effort becomes more feasible?

## Training Site Provided

As evidence of Egypt's new view, Western intelligence sources in Cairo say that Egypt is now providing not only arms and money but also a site for the training of guerrillas.

According to this account, last summer Algeria recruited about 5,000 young people for 12 weeks of training at a secret base about 100 miles south of Algiers. They were then moved to the Egyptian resort city of Faiyum, about 60 miles southwest of Cairo, for three weeks of additional training.

In the past, most of the guerrilla training is believed to have

taken place in Syria at two camps near Damascus and one near the Syrian-Lebanese border. This effort was directed by Syrian military headquarters.

Egypt's decision to join in the guerrilla campaign, Israeli sources say, should mean a larger, more intensive effort. But since most of the agents enter Israel and Israeli-occupied territory through Jordan and to some extent Syria, there is considerable military planning in Israel looking toward possible counterattacks.

## Number Put at 10,000

Israeli officials say that until now the Arab inhabitants in Israel have been either unsympathetic or afraid to cooperate with the terrorists and that more than 600 guerrillas have been killed or captured since June. However, the number of guerrillas is believed by some sources to exceed 10,000.

In the area of the Soviet replenishment of aircraft to Egypt, Israeli sources say that while about 220 jet fighters have been supplied, compared with a force of about 260 before the war, this includes about 55 modern Sukhoi-7's and 100 MIG-21's sent as replacements for less capable, older MIG-15's and 17's.

The Sukhoi, they say, can carry more than 2,000 pounds of bombs at low altitude from bases in Egypt to Tel Aviv.

The Israelis contend that a stronger Israeli air force would help deter war and thus would be a stabilizing influence. Whether it is persuasive or not, this argument is being used by Israel with France in hopes of ending the embargo on an order of 50 Mirage V jets, and with the United States, in hopes of getting about 50 F-4 Phantoms in addition to the 50 A-4 Skyhawks already purchased.

Israeli officials insist that if Egypt, particularly, despairs of achieving the capability for military action against Israel, she would eventually seek peace.